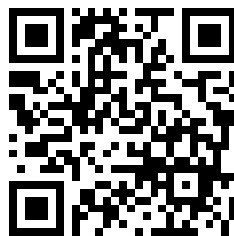

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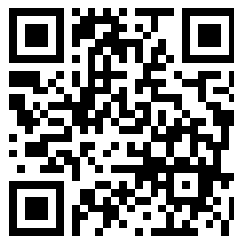
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VOLUME IV. PART II. NUMBER 2.

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THE LOATHLY LADY IN THE WOLFDIETRICH EPICS

ARCHER TAYLOR.

APRIL, 1917

Issued in two parts: Part I—Two numbers devoted to studies in pure and applied sciences. Part II—Two numbers devoted to studies in philology (including literature), philosophy, psychology, historical and social sciences

PUBLICATIONS OF WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF PUBLICATION, 10 DEPOT ST., CONCORD, N. H.
EDITORIAL OFFICE, WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY, ST. LOUIS

SERIES IV VOLUME IV WHOLE NUMBER XVI

Application pending for entry as second-class matter at the Post-Office at Concord, N. H.

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THE LOATHLY LADY IN THE WOLFDIETRICH EPICS

ARCHER TAYLOR

Instructor in German

It has been justly said of the Middle High German *Wolfdietrich* epics that they present to the student the most attractive and at the same time the most difficult problems. Notable advances towards the solution of these problems have been made in certain directions. The manuscripts have been classified; the character of the different versions has been commented upon, although some minor points remain to be cleared up. This has been chiefly the work of the editors of the *Deutsches Heldenbuch*,¹ and of Hermann Schneider, in his recent elaborate treatise, *Die Gedichte und die Saga von Wolfdietrich*.² What remains to be done is to examine in special cases the general statements concerning the relations of the different versions and thus to give each version its appropriate value. I shall here show that Schneider has considerably overestimated the importance of one of the versions in reconstructing the original form of the incident of the *Loathly Lady*. Except in so far as this correction of Schneider's results indicates a weakness in his *method*, its consequences for the remainder of his work are slight. The various incidents in the *Wolfdietrich* epics must be considered separately, for the relations of the versions vary in almost every instance.

It will be necessary to explain briefly the consensus of opinion concerning the versions of the *Wolfdietrich* epics with which I shall be engaged. The incident of the *Loathly Lady* occurs in the texts known as A, B, and D, and in the condensation by Kaspar von der Rhön. It is lacking in the fragmentary text called C. It is generally agreed that, for this incident, the condensation and the D text are valueless, since they are merely derivatives of A and B respectively, and cannot contain any-

¹ Ed. Amelung and Jänicke, Berlin, 1866-70.

² Munich, 1913.

thing significant which is not in their sources. Further it is agreed that the A and B texts, the only ones of importance, are somehow derived from a common source which, in accordance with Schneider's notation, I shall designate as *W. The problem is then to determine the nature of the *Loathly Lady* incident in *W by a comparison of A and B.³ It will not be necessary to discuss at length the curious fragment entitled *Abor und das Meerweib*,⁴ which is almost certainly related to one of these versions, for it does not throw much light on the questions involved. By a comparison of the two texts A and B, and by a careful use of the parallels to the *Loathly Lady* theme from folk-lore, it will be possible to show that B preserves much that has been obscured by a more skilful poet, the author of A.⁵

The incident of the *Loathly Lady* is familiar to all students of folk-lore. To it, with special reference to the Wife of Bath's Tale, a book⁶ has been devoted and it has been studied in its broader relations in an unpublished Harvard dissertation by Dr. J. W. Beach.⁷ It is the story of an uncouth woman who is unspelled by some act of the hero. The release from the charm is due to immersion in water,⁸ or to some sexual means, of which

³ The antecedent history of the B text, which is a condensation of a fuller form now lost, is complicated. This fuller form was not *W, for it contained the episode of the abduction of Sigeminne, the *Loathly Lady*, which could not have stood in *W. So there are at least two lost versions between *W and B. Nevertheless the only possible basis for the determination of *W is the comparison of A and B, since we know too little about the lost intermediate forms. I shall omit the episode of the abduction from the discussion because it has nothing to do with the *Loathly Lady* incident and is clearly a later addition.

⁴ Edited by J. Grimm, *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, V, 6-10; cf. textual criticism by Bartsch, *Germania*, V, 105 f.

⁵ Schneider holds the opposite opinion. His arguments will be refuted in detail. His method of textual criticism failed because he refused to avail himself of the assistance of folk-lore in the comparison of the two texts.

⁶ G. H. Maynadier, *The Wife of Bath's Tale: Its Sources and Analogues*, London, 1901.

⁷ *The Loathly Lady*, Ph.D. Diss., 1907.

⁸ Beach, *op. cit.*, ch. VI, *passim*; Child, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, I, pp. 308, 338, 342, 344; II, p. 505^b; III, p. 505; V, p. 39; Grimm, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, no. 191, *Das Meerhäschen*; Kittredge, *Journal of American Folklore*, XVIII, 4, n. 2; *Folk-Lore*, IV, 278, etc.

the *fier baiser* is a less obvious form,⁹ or to a variety of less frequent devices which will not concern us. It is clear that such a story of the disenchantment of a lady could be incorporated in any hero's adventures, with the proviso that the narrator, who has thus burdened himself and his story with a lady, must dispose of her in some way before the next adventure, or else find a place for her in his hero's life.

No one doubts that the incident of the *Loathly Lady* is an interpolation in the story of Wolfdietrich's adventures.¹⁰ The oldest versions in which it is found (A and B) still show traces of the juncture. The interruption in the story caused by the insertion is quite obvious. The incident is but ill-prepared for and the narrator disposes of the lady more or less unceremoniously, e. g., the death of Sigeminne in B is a violent means of clearing the stage so that the hero may continue his adventures without the impediment of a wife. Of course better evidence from the point of view of those who look beyond these two versions is the absence of the incident in the fragmentary C text which is probably derived from a source prior to *W, the source of A and B.

In both A and B the incident is inserted at the same point in Wolfdietrich's life, viz., after the failure of his first attempt to regain the kingdom of Constantinople which his brothers had usurped. It would be uselessly confusing to relate here the several conflicting versions of Wolfdietrich's life. Suffice it to say that the epics tell of his boyhood, the loss of his inheritance and at great length his ultimately successful efforts to regain it; in other words, the so-called Aryan Expulsion and Return formula. At almost every point the versions vary in details.

⁹ Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*⁴, p. 922; Paris, *Romania*, XX, 301; Philipot, *Romania*, XXVI, 303; Bolte and Polivka, *Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, I, p. 9; II, pp. 36, 236, 271; Kittredge, *A Study of Gawain and the Green Knight*, p. 268; Wuttke, *Der deutsche Volksaberglaube*², p. 30; Ehrismann, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, XXX, 26. For instances in literature see Andrae, *Beiblatt zur Anglia*, XVII, 82; *Studien zur vergleichenden Literaturgeschichte*, II, 360-361, 472, n. 4; H. Rider Haggard, *Ayesha*; J. Riegel, *Quellen zu William Morris' Earthly Paradise*, p. 29.

¹⁰ Cf. O. L. Jiriczek, *Die deutsche Heldensage*⁴, p. 176; Schneider, pp. 220 ff.

Beyond agreement in a general way on the position of the insertion, the two texts (A and B) have little in common either in the setting or in the details of the incident. The differences in these matters, which are of considerable importance in determining the relations of the two versions, will appear most clearly in brief summaries.

In A the story runs as follows: ¹¹ Woldietrich and his retainers are endeavoring to regain the kingdom of Constantinople from the usurping brothers. They fail and are besieged in a castle. Woldietrich escapes and undertakes to get aid for his cause from Ortnit of Lombardy.¹² In passing through the hostile camp he slays all who speak to him and so makes his escape unnoticed. Yet it is also implied that he is pursued:

der huote gēn den vīnden	er alters eine phlac.
des tages wol zweinsic tōten	sant er in in das her:
dō sis innen wurden,	si fluhen āne wer. ¹³

He often loses his way and when night overtakes him he builds a fire and is ready to defend himself from the wild beasts:

Dō machete er ein fiuwer,	das ūbr al den walt erschein.
die ronen ungeflēge	truoc er dar alters ein.
dō versuochte er vil des wildes	durch sinen tumben sin:
vil gern het ers bestanden,	deheins bestuont aber in. ¹⁴

For five days he wanders on through the wilderness, at the last bearing his saddle and dragging his beloved horse Valke after him.¹⁵ Stumbling down a mountain slope they reach the sea-shore. There under a linden in a meadow waist-deep in flowers he falls asleep. An uncouth creature, a *merwīp*, comes out of the sea, takes the sword of the sleeping hero and conceals herself in a near-by hollow tree. Woldietrich awakes to find himself weaponless. Without being much concerned over the state

¹¹ *Deutsches Heldenbuch*, III, pp. 133 ff, Adventure XI, str. 447 ff.

¹² The hero who escapes from a besieged castle in order to summon aid is a conventional figure in mediæval story, cf. Schneider, pp. 235, 280; L. Gautier, *Les épopées françaises*, II, p. 280; R. Heinzel, *Ueber die ostgotische Heldensage*, *Sitzungsberichte der Wiener Akademie*, phil.-hist. Klasse, CXIX, p. 77.

¹³ Str. 449.

¹⁴ Str. 453.

¹⁵ This is a conventional descriptive detail, cf. Schneider, p. 266.

of affairs he takes out a history of his life and reads it aloud to the *merwip*:¹⁶

Dô nam er sîne brieve
alle sîne swære
die frowe lîse hôte,
alles das an dem brieve

mit jâmer in die hant.
er dar ane geschriben vant.
unz das er gar gelas
von im geschriben was.¹⁷

Then she reproaches him for carelessness and for trespassing on her property. She declares herself ready, however, to help him if he is of noble birth. Then without further ado she offers herself to Wolfdietrich, who refuses her in unmeasured terms:

"Das du mich nemeest ze wîbe,
"Nein ich, ûf mîne triuwe,"
"Nu lâ mich alhie sterben,
des übelen tiuvels muoter

ich gib dir driu künircch."
sprach Wolf Dietrich.
ich enruoch was mir geschicht:
kumt an mînen arm niht."¹⁸

This is surely straight from the shoulder, yet his further remarks are curiously inconsistent. He seems to be afraid of offending the "lady," and declares that he has vowed to have no relations with women until his death,¹⁹ then he returns again to his former uncompromising hostility, saying:

"nâem aber ich alle frouwen,
der tiuvel ûz der helle

dannoch muoz ich dich versuern.
kæin wol zer hôchst."²⁰

Without another word the smiling *merwip* throws off her scaly coat and appears in wondrous beauty. Wolfdietrich regrets his hasty objections and says that his vow is to last only until he has defeated his brothers. She knows that he is predestined for another wife,²¹ and asks for one of his brothers as a husband. Then she gives him a root which will strengthen him for all

¹⁶ This biography in letter form has been mentioned before in the A text (str. 139, 304) but does not appear in B. It may have been suggested by the similar letter in *Aiol*, 454. On its use cf. Bernatsky, *Über die Entwicklung der typischen Motive in den mittelhochdeutschen Spielmannsepen, besonders in den Wolfdietrichen*, Diss., Greifswald, 1909, pp. 56-58.

¹⁷ Str. 477.

¹⁸ Str. 489.

¹⁹ Such vows are common-places in mediæval fiction. Here the author of A has not fitted it smoothly into his motivation, for a little later he interprets the vow differently. Bernatsky's explanation (*op. cit.*, p. 49) is entirely out of the question.

²⁰ Str. 490, 4, 491, 1.

²¹ Str. 495, 2.

emergencies²² and directs him on his way along the shore. We hear no more of the disenchanted *merwîp*; presumably Wolfdietrich's promise of a husband was fulfilled in the lost portion of A.

In B the episode of the *Loathly Lady* is inserted at the same point in the adventures of Wolfdietrich as it is in A, viz., after the defeat of his first attempt to regain Constantinople. The immediate surroundings are, however, quite different. The hero sees that his followers are being slaughtered on the battlefield and makes off as best he can with the survivors, Berchtung and his eleven remaining sons. They turn aside from the highway and in a forest-meadow find concealment from their enemies for the night. After some discussion with Berchtung, who asserts that a monster has pursued Wolfdietrich for three (variant: seven) years,²³ the hero carries his point and watches while the others sleep. Then a *rûhez wîp*, the forest-woman Rauhels, comes up on all fours like a bear.²⁴ Wolfdietrich doubts her intentions but she reassures him and at once demands that he marry her:²⁵

nu minne mich, Wolfdietrich,
ich gib dir ein künierche,

"Ich bin gehiure gar.
sô wirstu sorgen bar.
dar zuo ein wîtez lant."²⁶

Wolfdietrich's refusal is couched in even more brutal terms than in A.²⁷ Enraged, the forest-woman casts a charm on him and robs him of his sword. Wolfdietrich pursues her into the forest on a path which she magically causes to lie smooth before him.

²² The figure of the monster which gives the hero a gift to aid him in his adventures is common enough in *märchen* and romance, e. g., Schneider, p. 30. This figure has no connection with the *Loathly Lady* incident although they are occasionally combined.

²³ This pursuit has never been mentioned before. Berchtung's remark seems to be a clumsy attempt to prepare for the *Loathly Lady* incident.

²⁴ Schneider's parallels (p. 266) are inapposite. The *tertium quid* in the comparison to a bear is crawling about on all fours; in his parallels it is the hairiness of the creature.

²⁵ This is characteristic of forest-women and the like, cf. Mannhardt, *Wald und Feldkultur*, I, pp. 126-138.

²⁶ Str. 309. The variant in the K manuscript of the B text leaves no doubt as to the meaning of *nu minne mich*.

²⁷ For similar incidents cf. Bernatzky, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

When he finally comes up to her under a linden, he again refuses her proffered love. She wishes to comb his hair,²⁸ but when he

²⁸ The intent of this wish is not apparent. Combing the hair, especially of a monster, is frequent, e. g. (Hertfordshire) *Folk-Lore*, VII, 412 (fish-heads); (Greek) *ibid.*, X, 496 and XI, 453; (Hebrides) *ibid.*, VII, 400; Rhys, *Celtic Folk-Lore*, II, p. 434; G. Henderson, *Survivals in Belief Among the Celts*, p. 164; A. W. Moore, *Folklore of the Isle of Man*, Douglas, 1891, p. 55; Bolte and Polivka, *Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, I, p. 125 note; M. R. Cox, *Cinderella*, p. 498, n. 34; *Hocker, *Die Stammsagen der Hohenzollern*, Düsseldorf, 1857, p. 150; R. Wilhelm, *Chinesische Märchen*, no. 9, p. 19; cf. *Folk-Lore*, IV, 27, 29, 44 (Finnish), and 324.

The incident of the monster laying its head in a girl's lap before going to sleep seems to be a weaker form. Examples are: (Ananci) *Folk-Lore Journal*, I, 289; (Armenian) *Folk-Lore*, XXI, 367, and XXII, 352; Child, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, no. 23, *Judas*, str. 7; no. 36, *The Laily Worm*, str. 3 (cf. I, p. 315); no. 37, *Thomas Rymer*, A, str. 11; cf. *Folk-Lore*, I, 41, 341 (Finnish); R. Wilhelm, *op. cit.*, no. 7, p. 13, etc.

Seemingly a very primitive form is lousing the monster's head, e. g., the collections of instances in Child, *op. cit.*, V, p. 487 (Index) and I, p. 488^b; Bolte and Polivka, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 207 note, 376; Kahle, *Germania*, XXXVI, 379; Hartland, *Legend of Perseus*, III, pp. 179, 211. Further examples are (Greek) Hahn, II, p. 286 (cited in *Folk-Lore Journal*, III, 223); (Swabian) Birlinger, I, p. 368 (cited *ibid.*, III, 236); (Chilean) *ibid.*, III, 290 (said to be an American innovation in the *märchen*); (Balochi) *Folk-Lore*, IV, 196; (Shuswap) *ibid.*, X, 196 f; (Greek) *ibid.*, XI, 343; (Lushai) *ibid.*, XX, 406; B. H. Chamberlain, *Aino Folk Tales*, no. 30, p. 34; (Finnish) *Aberg, *Nylandska Folksagor*, no. 252, p. 322; *Salmelainen, *Tales and Legends of the Finns*, no. 7; (Micmac) *Rand, no. 46; *Eriu, I, 23; *C. Plummer, *Vita Sanctorum Hibernia*, I, p. cvii; *Mannhardt, *Germanische Mythologie*, p. 431; Tchérax, *L'Orient Inédit*, p. 83; Magnus, *Russian Folk-Tales*, p. 138; Fortier, *Journal of American Folklore*, I, 143. Further compare Child, *op. cit.*, no. 114, *Johnnie Cock*, C, str. 1; L. F. Weber, *Märchen und Schwank*, Diss., Kiel, 1904, p. 57, n. 1; (India) *Folk-Lore Journal*, I, 184; C. Reuter, *Schelmufsky* (vollständige Fassung), *Neudrucke deutscher Literaturwerke*, nos. 57-58, p. 20; (Hausa) *Folk-Lore*, XXI, 354; R. M. Meyer, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, p. 573; R. Hunt, *Popular Romances of the West of England*², p. 433 and the curious superstition mentioned by Miss Trevelyan, *Folk-Lore and Folk-Stories of Wales*, p. 283.

A widespread *schwank* exhibits in its various forms modifications to avoid mention of lousing. A woman thrown into a well for her obstinacy even to the last makes the motions of pinching lice; in later forms this motion is interpreted as opening and shutting scissors and the story is adapted accordingly. References are collected in Pauli, *Schimpf und Ernst*, no. 289; Crane, *Italian Popular Tales*, p. 378; Clemen, *Zeitschrift für deutsche Wortforschung*, XV, 276; (modern instances) Andrae, *Romanische Forschungen*, XVI, 347; see further *Folk-Lore Record*, II, 173; *ibid.*, III, 127; Bédier, *Les Fabliaux*², pp. 45 ff; Pauli, *op. cit.*, no. 595; Denham Tracts, I, pp. 172-173 *passim*; Montanus, *Schwankbücher* (ed. Bolte), p. 622; Rittershaus, *Die neuisländischen Volksmärchen*, p. 450; R. Köhler, *Kleinere Schriften*, I, 136, 506; *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, V, 289-293; *Revue des traditions populaires*, IV, 30; VIII, 197, 378, 589; IX, 500, 611, 653; XX, 102; *Annuaire de la société des*

objects she causes a magic sleep to fall on him. She cuts off his nails and two locks of hair ²⁹ and curses him to wander and eat his food from the ground. While all this is happening Berchtung makes a long, unsuccessful search for his master and finally returns to Constantinople, whither his sons had preceded him. After half a year God takes pity on Wolddietrich in his miserable plight ³⁰ and sends an angel to Rauhels, threatening her with death by thunder ³¹ within three days if she does not release the hero from the spell. She seeks him out in the forest and offers him her love for the third time. Wolddietrich's experiences have made him less of a stickler for feminine beauty and he agrees on the sole condition that she be baptized. To this she consents and for the ceremony takes him over the sea to Troy to a Fountain of Youth ³² half warm and half cold.³³ She re-

traditions populaires, III, 19; *Volkskunde* (Ghent), VIII, 32; *Orient und Occident*, III, 376. For the type cf. Böhm, *Lettsche Schwänke*, Reval, 1911, no. 17; *Mélusine*, IV, 568; Hilka, *Jahresbericht der schlesischen Gesellschaft für vaterländische Kultur*, XC, 4, p. 7; Andrae, *Romanische Forschungen*, XXXIV, 898; *Literaturblatt für germanische und romanische Philologie*, 1880, 424; Liebrecht, *Germania*, XXVIII, 421 (Bondeson, nos. 38, 39).

References which happen to be inaccessible are marked with an asterisk. This note is long and detailed because the instances have not been collected before.

²⁹ The belief that power over another may be gained by possession of hair or clippings of his nails is widespread, cf. J. A. MacCulloch, *Childhood of Fiction*, pp. 125, 144; the story of Samson and Delilah illustrates the point.

³⁰ Schneider (p. 323) suggests that this episode is borrowed from the *Yvain* of Chrétien de Troyes, possibly through Hartmann von Aue's translation.

³¹ Fear of thunder is characteristic of such mythical forest-creatures, cf. J. Grimm, *Kleinere Schriften*, II, p. 425; *Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde*, IV, 71; E. H. Meyer, *Germanische Mythologie*, Berlin, 1891, §207; *Folk-Lore*, I, 18, 153, and references; *ibid.*, II, 407; *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, X, 195; R. Wilhelm, *Chinesische Märchen*, no. 58, pp. 174 and 305; (Mongolia) *Folk-Lore Journal*, IV, 33; cf. Trevelyan, *op. cit.*, pp. 42 ff.

³² This is the earliest instance of the Fountain of Youth in German literature. On the origin of the conception see E. W. Hopkins, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, XXVI (1905), 1-67, 411-415 and *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, VI, 115 ff. A similar confusion of the Fountain of Youth and baptism occurs in Luther's works, see E. Klinger, *Luther und der deutsche Volksaberglaube* (Palästra, LVI), p. 9, n. 6.

³³ The significance of this curious detail is not apparent. E. H. Meyer, *Germanische Mythologie*, p. 89, has compared this fountain to the *Wolkenkessel*, i. e., the cloud conceived as a spring, but that does not seem apposite. For similar hot and cold fountains (not all of them rejuvenating) see *Flamenca*, v. 1483; O. H. Prior, *Caxton's*

ceives the name Sigeminne.³⁴ Wolfdietrich's wish that he were as comely as before is satisfied by a bath in the fountain and at once he goes to bed with Sigeminne. After this follows the abduction-episode, which has no connection with the *Loathly Lady* incident.

The problem is then to determine the relation of these two forms. Without much discussion Schneider states that the form A is the older and is the source of the incident as it appears in B.³⁵ He gives the following reasons for his opinion: A implies all that is found in B, and is necessary for the understanding of B; in A the transformation of the *merwip* is "reasonable" and

Mirrou of the World (Early Eng. Text Soc., no. 110), p. 112; Hans Sachs, *Schwänke* (*Neudrucke deutscher Literaturwerke*, CX-CXVII), no. 115, p. 321; Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligés*, v. 5629; Herbert, *Catalogue of Romances in the British Museum*, III, p. 176, no. 118. In some cases this detail seems to be the last touch of luxury.

³⁴ Perhaps this name has some significance which is now lost. Brunier, *Die germanische Heldensage*, p. 65, says "der Name Siegminne hat Anspruch auf Sagenrecht." If, as seems most probable, the name is an old one, the etymology which connects the name with *Sieg*, often the first component of names of supernatural women, and with *minne* (O. H. G. *menni*), which has similar associations, has much to recommend it. Instances of the use of *Sieg* with this connotation are Sigune, *Titirel*, 105 (cf. *Parzival*, 435); Sigelint in the *Nibelungenlied*; Sigrun, *Helga kv. Hundingsbana*, II, str. 45; and Sigdrifa, *Helr. Brunhildar*, str. 7; cf. E. H. Meyer, *Germanische Mythologie*, p. 176. Grimm (*Deutsche Mythologie*, p. 358) suggests that *siguwip (a hypothetical form) may have been a name for such creatures. The most curious of these instances is the name Signild in the Danish ballad *Grælver Kongesøn*, for the story told in this ballad has some similarity to the present incident of the *Loathly Lady*, cf. Schneider, p. 252. For the mythical associations of *minne* (from O. H. G. *menni*) compare M. H. G. *waltminne* (forest-woman), *merminne* (mermaid); Graff, *Althochdeutscher Sprachschatz*, II, p. 774; Grimm, *op. cit.*, pp. 361, 404, III, p. 142.

Another etymology is proposed by J. Grimm (*Kleinere Schriften*, II, p. 319 note). He explains *Sieg* as above but relates *minne* to the noun *minne* (love) and the proper name Minna. Further evidence is collected in Benecke, Müller, and Zarncke, *Mittelhochdeutsches Wörterbuch*, II, 1, p. 181, no. 3. This explanation is entirely out of the question in the case of *waltminne* (*Deutsches Wörterbuch*, XIII, col. 1173).

Mannhardt's etymology (*Wald- und Feldkulte*, I, p. 109) is absolutely impossible. He construes *minne* as love and *sieg* as a verb-form; the name would then have the meaning "dass die Minne siege." Curiously enough such a pun was made on the name, cf. *Virginal*, str. 1026. Compounds of this sort are unknown in German of this period, cf. Wilmanns, *Deutsche Grammatik*, II, pp. 404 ff; Grimm, *Deutsche Grammatik* (ed. Scherer), II, p. 963; Osthoff, *Verbum in der Nominalkomposition*, pp. 125-136; Wossidlo, *Imperativische Bildungen im Niederdeutschen*; Ulrich von Lichtenstein, *Frauendienst*, (ed. Bechstein) str. 1552, 1 note.

³⁵ Pp. 30, 37, 64 ff.

in keeping with the story, while in B it is pointless ("sinnlos angewandt"); the remark "ich gib dir driu künierich" (A, str. 489) is the suggestion which gave rise to the real kingdom over which the Sigeminne of B (str. 335, 2) rules; the incident is loosely attached in A and is "central" in B; *Abor und das Meer-weib* represents fairly well the source of the *Loathly Lady* incident in the Wolddietrich epics, and *Abor* stands closer to A than to B. If these statements could be defended, then Schneider would have made his case beyond a doubt.

In proof of the first generality Schneider offers nothing. Abundant evidence will appear to disprove it. The second point cannot be defended. The disenchantment in A follows immediately on Wolddietrich's none too courteous refusal of the lady's hand. She smiles and at once throws off her scaly coat. This procedure agrees with nothing that we know elsewhere in folk-lore and cannot possibly be the original state of affairs. Some explanation of the unspelling is always offered in folktales. Now in B the release of the *Loathly Lady* from the charm is consequent upon the hero's acceptance of her hand and, although another reason for the unspelling obviously exists, is said to be due to a bath in a Fountain of Youth. Traces of this other reason are to be found in a variant (MS. K, str. 309, 2) and in the question "Ob ich iuch gerne minnet, wie kæme i'u durch daz hâr?" (str. 334, 2) which is common to all the manuscripts. The significance of Wolddietrich's question has been obscured, but nevertheless we can catch a glimpse of a very outspoken form of the incident and one which the narrator of B, as we have it, either could not or would not understand. It should be abundantly apparent that if either transformation is "pointless" it is the transformation related in A.

The third and fourth points that Schneider makes are rather intangible. It is improbable that the remark "ich gib dir driu künierich" (A, str. 489) should have suggested to the author of B that his heroine might be represented as a queen. Such women awaiting disenchantment have kingdoms at their disposal frequently enough and it is idle to seek a reason why Rauhels in B has one. The remark that the incident is loosely

attached in A and is "central" in B is due to a confusion. No doubt the incident does occupy a vastly more important place in B than in A. But this is caused by the addition of a considerable amount of extraneous matter, i. e., the whole later history of Sigeminne, which has nothing whatsoever to do with the episode of the *Loathly Lady*; the comparison between A and B can only be made when these later accretions have been removed. When that has been done, as in the foregoing summary, it appears that the episode has no real relation to the life of Wolddietrich in either version. The lines of juncture are still clearly visible in B, for there is no later mention of the army which was hotly pursuing Wolddietrich and his companions when he escaped for the night into the forest. Further it must be pointed out that A emphasizes deliberately the episodic nature of all of Wolddietrich's adventures. Each one ends with "alrêst wil in die sorge Wolf her Dietrich" or some modification thereof. Clearly the author of A conceived the story in terms of disconnected incidents, chosen to illustrate the trials of his hero, and his tendency would be to alter his material in order to accentuate its disconnectedness.

The last point rests on the interpretation of the relations of *Abor und das Meerweib*. The value of that confusing fragment as evidence for one side or the other is still in dispute.* The only detail in which *Abor* agrees with A against B is very suspicious; in both the supernatural woman gives the hero a magic article when he is about to leave. Such gifts, although frequent in other circumstances, are not characteristic of the *Loathly Lady* incident. The agreement of *Abor* and A in this regard can have little or no weight because the corresponding portion of B has been lost owing to the addition of the abduction-motif. For all we know the gift might have been found in the source of B. On the other hand if *Abor* is admitted as evidence, then Schneider must explain away some curious details in which *Abor* agrees with B against A, e. g., the meeting of the hero and

* Von Unwerth (*Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, XLVI, 117) also questions Schneider's opinion in the case of *Abor*.

the "lady" takes place in a forest; he is rejuvenated in a fountain; they live together as man and wife for a time.

Schneider's assertion of the priority of A cannot be maintained. The true state of affairs is this: A represents the original extent of the incident, while B preserves the details with much greater accuracy. The A text is the work of a skilful hand which did not stop at changes in minor details and in the intent of the incident. From the point of view of literature B is much less meritorious but it retains old traits much more faithfully than A. These statements I shall prove by showing that much in A belongs to the "stock in trade" of the mediæval epic and that the features in which B differs from A are familiar in folk-lore, although they are not always part of the conventional epic style.

Conventional details in A are comparatively abundant. Thus the hero who escapes from a beleaguered castle to seek aid for his comrades is a familiar figure; the pursuit of the hero from a battlefield where he has been defeated is rare. Remnants of the original form of the incident which must have been somewhat like B are still to be found in A, e. g., the pursuit which is hinted at in A (str. 449). The fire which he builds in his wanderings is a reminiscence of the fire about which Wolddietrich and his companions are lying when the hero is charmed away, for in A in its present form the camp-fire has no significance. The account of his life which Wolddietrich reads to the listening *merwip* is conspicuously out of place. The author of A had used this letter to cut the knot before and inserts it again here without much regard for the plausibility of the situation. In A, as in so many mediæval stories, the hero is under a vow of chastity. This vow has been inserted at the expense of logic (from the point of view of folk-lore) in the method of the *Loathly Lady's* disenchantment. One of the redactors of the Wolddietrich epics extricates his hero from obligations to ladies by promising the hand of one of his retainers; and A shows the hand of some such reviser, for the original form of our episode could not possibly have contained such a promise. The magic root which Wolddietrich receives from the unspelled *merwip* may or may not

have been in the earliest form of the incident; such gifts have no relation to the story of the *Loathly Lady*. The author of A has adapted the original and somewhat refractory form of the incident to the stereotyped adventures of the mediæval hero by replacing less familiar details with conventional ones and furnishing up the whole by the insertion of a few well-worn motifs from other sources.

The text known as B contains much old material, which is not found in A. The characteristics of the *râhez wîp*, Rauhels, are all vouched for in folk-lore: her appearance,³⁷ her fear of thunder, her desire for association with Wolfdietrich, and the fact that she gains power over him by cutting his hair and nails. Of more significance is the method of her disenchantment. The deficiencies of A from the point of view of folk-lore have already been pointed out. In B the unspelling takes place according to the "rules of the game," as folk-lore interprets them. A curious excess of means for disenchantment is to be seen in B. It is evident that the use of the Fountain of Youth for this purpose is an interpolation. Rauhels has known of, indeed has owned, this fountain for a long time. No reasons why she should not have bathed in it before are alleged. It is possible that the original form of the incident was too outspoken and coarse—there are hints pointing in that direction—and so some redactor inserted the Fountain of Youth, which was then beginning to be known in Europe, as the means of disenchantment. Perhaps a remnant of the earlier state of affairs is to be found in the haste with which Wolfdietrich and Sigeminne go to bed after their bath in the fountain. It is probable that immersion in water was a condition for disenchantment in the earliest form; on the one hand (B) this condition was the hint which led to the

³⁷ It would require considerable space to show this. Typical forest-women with whom Rauhels may be compared are found in *Wolfdietrich* D, Adventure VII, str. 115 ff (*Deutsches Heldenbuch*, IV, p. 121); Heinrich von Neustadt, *Apollonius von Tyrland*, vv. 9017 ff; Heinrich von dem Türlin, *Die Crone*, vv. 9350 ff; Wirnt von Grafenberg, *Wigalois*, vv. 6255 ff. Constant reference must be had to Mannhardt, *Wald- und Feldkulte*; cf. Puckett, *Journal of Eng. and Germ. Phil.*, XV, 181-191.

The fact that the sea-creature in A owns a meadow and a linden is not necessarily a reminiscence of a land-creature; such *merwîp* occasionally have possessions on land, cf. *Thidrekssaga*, ch. xxxiii.

insertion of the Fountain of Youth, while on the other (A) it necessarily disappeared because bathing could not be a prerequisite for the unspelling of a sea-creature.

The history of the *Loathly Lady* incident in the *Wolfdietrich* epics is as follows: it was inserted into the epic at a comparatively early period in the history of the texts before us (not necessarily in the history of the *sage*). The author of A modified it very considerably by tempering its brutality and frankness and by adding conventional details. It is probable that he changed the heroine from a forest-woman to a sea-creature. The elaborate description of the *merwip* is probably his handiwork. His skill appears to the best advantage in a new conception of the significance of the incident, for it illuminates the faithfulness of the hero to his retainers instead of being a digression. Although he did not remove all the discrepancies due to his alterations, the praise which has been given to him is well-deserved.³⁸ The treatment of the incident in the texts from which B, as we have it, has been derived was quite different.³⁹ Many details were retained without change, so that B contributes to our understanding of A. The Fountain of Youth, which may have been suggested by mention of water as the unspelling medium in the source, was inserted in B. The redactors failed to understand the spirit of the *Heimkehrsage*, the theme of the *Wolfdietrich* epics, and inserted the long episode of the abduction of Sigeminne.⁴⁰ In a version derived from the B text an interesting addition occurs in the following strophe explaining the spell on Sigeminne:

Von einer stiefmutter
daz wisset, tegen guter,

an mich wendet der beste,
daz bistu, lieber herre;

³⁸ Brunier (*Die germanische Heldensage*, p. 62) declares that he was second only to the author of the *Nibelungenlied* and was superior to the author of *Gudrun* in skill.

³⁹ For the sake of clearness I shall omit discussion of the number and the nature of the hypothetical lost versions between B, as we have it, and the ultimate source.

⁴⁰ On the *Heimkehrsage*, see Hahn, *Sagwissenschaftliche Studien*, *passim*.

The abduction-episode was probably derived from *Salman und Morolf*, cf. Schneider, pp. 220-222, 324; modifications and interpolations are noticeable in it, e. g., the figure of Fromuot.

ich verfluchet bin,
bisz daz die sinne sin

der in der welt hat daz leben;
wiltu mir din hulde geben.⁴¹

Clearly the narrator felt that some explanation of the ugliness of the *Loathly Lady* was necessary and added the widespread motif of the step-mother's curse.⁴² This curse could not have been a part of the original story for it does not appear in A or B. Further proof that this strophe is a later addition is found in the manuscripts; in one it is entirely lacking and in another the curse is said to be that of a *farnde frawe*. The instances of the *Loathly Lady* in folk-lore show that her unseemliness requires no explanation. So even in its latest form the incident of the *Loathly Lady* continued to undergo modification.

⁴¹ Holtzmann, *Der grosse Wolfdietrich*, str. 550 (*Deutsches Heldenbuch*, IV, p. 289, str. 333, 9).

⁴² Examples in Beach, *The Loathly Lady* (MS. dissertation), ch. XI, p. 77; Bolte and Polivka, *Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, I, p. 86.

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